A Word From TIm Downs - June

The Best Kept Secret in the Southeast Conference

Dear Friends,

In the afterglow of our annual meetings, which have been characterized through the years by excellent and inspiring worship, superb convocations and workshops, good food and fellowship, I find myself deeply grateful for the connection with colleagues and the inspiration of our shared ministries. However, I also note that perhaps a third of the authorized ministers who are voting members of the conference are present, and wonder, "So where are the rest of them, the other 2/3 of the ministers, and what are we not doing to reach out to all?" I also note that many churches do not send their full complement of delegates (every church has a minimum of three delegates, with another delegate for every 100 members over 100, so a church of 200 members would have four delegates).

Is this because we are unaccustomed to relationship out of our history of geographic separation, or our cultural and racial diversity? Is there something in the DNA of the UCC that does not cultivate and foster a sense of belonging? Should ministers be required to attend meetings as a condition of maintaining their standing? Or is it that we just do not have the conflicts that attract passionate attendance? Or, frankly that the programs and resources we offer just do not appeal to people? Maybe it is that people feel the presence and involvement of the Conference and the UCC through our vital web presence, through the staff availability to churches, and in other ways, and do not have further need for relationship. Or do we need to rethink how it is that we do this work?

In light of these questions, the staff posed a question to the Board of Directors at their meeting on June 11th. I pose it to you now, as well. Should we shift to a pattern of meeting every other year, or should we consider conducting the business meeting of the Conference by webinar using the technology and resources that are at our disposal? Should we deemphasize the business aspect of our lives and emphasize the worship and programmatic parts of what we do? Please email if you have thoughts. We will be doing some creative rethinking over the coming year.

Peace,

Tim Downs

Timothy Downs

Conference Minister

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2010 TAP Graduate is in a "CLASS OF HER OWN"

It was somewhat unusual this year, but we had only one individual who graduated from the Theology Among the People (TAP) Program at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting in Knoxville, TN. Gwen Thomas, who started with the TAP group at Victory UCC in Stone Mountain, GA six years ago, completed TAP via distance learning, following a hiatus from the program due to work and other obligations. Gwen, however, demonstrates how TAP remains a way in which we equip the saints for the work of ministry in the Southeast Conference, and both discover and nurture leadership in local, conference, and national settings of the United Church of Christ.

Gwen Thomas is a self-avowed Liberation Theologian and Womanist. She is a candidate for ministerial licensing in the UCC and serves as a lay minister at the Victory Church in Stone Mountain, GA. At Victory, she is the coordinator of the Gateway Ministry which deliberately reaches out to LGBT individuals in the congregation. Gateway Ministry supports and celebrates LGBT individuals, families and groups and is committed to ensuring that LGBT persons are fully engaged into the ministry and life of the church. The goal is to create safe and sacred space for worship, missions, education and fellowship. Also at Victory, Gwen teaches adult-level Christian education.

Additionally, she facilitates many women's retreats and spiritual workshops and is presently a consultant for the Center for Progressive Renewal. At the national level of the denomination Gwen is a part of the leadership team for UCAN (The United Church of Christ HIV/AIDS Network). She was recently chosen as part of the writing team for the UCC's Faith Practices. Currently, Gwen serves as the Interim Executive Director for UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns.

Outside of ministry in the church, Gwen is a speaker and consultant. She presents various professional development and personal growth topics. She has provided training and motivational speaking throughout the United States, in the Caribbean and six other countries; including Australia and New Zealand.

She has extensive experience and expertise in communication skills and women's empowerment. She is the author of a book called The S.H.E. Experience and she presents a workshop of the same title and offers personal and professional coaching around the same theme. She has spent the majority of her professional life motivating and teaching others in professional positions and in spiritual environments.

Gwen is a graduate student at Strayer University pursuing a Master's of Education with a concentration in Adult Education and Development. She has one adult son and three grandchildren. She lives with her partner Marilyn and their 6 lb Schnoodle Sophie.

What TAP has Meant to Me -- My standard for scholarly instruction, dialog and community is now measured by my TAP experiences. I have never been more informed, inspired or transformed in any other academic setting. I feel extremely blessed and guided by the Divine to have had this theological training that is second to none. In fact, since going through TAP and now attending the KLS Preaching Institute[at Victory UCC in Stone Mountain, GA], I have beyond reasonable expectations for any seminary!

TAP was more than informative, it was experiential and communal. I made lifelong friends and colleagues. My knowledge of the universal church and the UCC increased and my way of talking and writing about God expanded. I was validated and affirmed as we shared our unique historical and personal contexts regarding church and faith. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to fully explore my thoughts and feelings about God and about myself and others in relation to God. What a blessed journey this has been.

***Gwen Thomas** -- June, 2010*

The UCC has been wonderfully responsive to the flooding in Nashville and surrounding areas. Connie & Bob Waidmann, Florence Coppola, the Ala-Tn Association, and the SEC have all been extremely supportive, helpful, and comforting during this time of need.

To date, we have received $2,000 for food & water relief from **One Great Hour** of Sharing, over $1,200 from the Ala-Tn Association for continuing recovery efforts, 100 clean-up kits and over 500 hygiene kits, and we raised over $2,500 via a local yard sale effort this past weekend. Additionally, we have received and distributed gloves, boots, cleaning, and hygiene supplies provided by our Ala-Tn family churches and from the Iowa flood recovery group. (Ironically, Holy Trinity had a disaster recovery team in Iowa helping after the floods there the weekend of the Nashville floods. The Iowa team generously sent the Nashville team home with lots and lots of boots & gloves!)

Holy Trinity volunteer work crews have helped about a dozen of its own families dig out and clean up from the floods. Clean-up and long-term rebuilding continues for many of those families. Following is an email I received from an individual in our congregation who was helped:

> *Now that my life has slowed down since May 2nd, I want to thank you for the Kroger gift card, the comforting CD music, and letting my church family know I needed help with moving all of belongings to a new residence. I had never met some of the volunteers before May 8, but that did not matter to them or to me in this situation. They arrived at my house May 8, Saturday morning with a U-haul truck, a lot of energy, and a smile that said we are here for you and we will get this job done! They must have been sent from God by way of your email or phone call. They drove, loaded and unloaded the truck with my stuff to a storage garage and to my new apartment. They refused any money I offered for the truck and they tolerated my attitude that was seriously affected by stress. God blessed me with eight helpers from Holy Trinity.*

With clothes, racks supplied by Marshall's, volunteers provided by Dell Computers, and an abundance of clothing supplied by church members and attendees, Holy Trinity opened a clothes closet to the community daily for two weeks. Interestingly, prior to the floods, we designated May 2010 as "Family Month" at Holy Trinity and rather than have children's church, the children were and are actively a part of services each week in May. We have very limited space and would not have been able to have the clothes closet <u>and</u> children's church at the same time… It is amazing how God takes care of the smallest details! While the large clothes closet is officially shutting down today, we are continuing a small clothes closet and food pantry that are part of Holy Trinity's existing & ongoing ministries.

The May 22 "Yard Sale" mentioned above, was an opportunity to give away many, many items to flood victims. We gave away furniture, household items, kitchen items, clothes, food, cleaning & hygiene supplies, toys, equipment, and so much more… In addition, "yard sale" shoppers who were not flood victims gave donations for future recovery efforts, totaling over $2,500.

About 50 of the clean-up kits and 250 of the hygiene kits are now at Howard Congregational and are being distributed to communities that have been identified as underserved thus far. All other kits have been distributed as needed.

The four UCC churches in Nashville continue to assess needs within their congregations and communities, and will meet together with the National UCC Disaster group June 16-18 to begin long-term recovery ministries. We look forward to working with our UCC family from across the SEC and the nation as we continue recovery efforts. Nashville is a vibrant and loving community with a bright and hopeful future. God is still speaking ya'll!

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News From our Local Churches - June

> First Congregational UCC, Atlanta Celebrates 143rd Anniversary

On May 30th, First Congregational UCC, Atlanta celebrated it 143rd anniversary by hosting the renowned preacher Dr. Calvin Butts III of Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York. Following the service they broke ground for phase two of the renovation of their main sanctuary and addition of a fellowship hall. Of note also is that First Church has arranged a work camp at Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS, in 2011.

> Looking Backward and Forward

Both history and future are rich in Savannah, GA, where the American Missionary Association unites education, church, and African American culture. Janus, the Roman god, is characterized by two faces: one face looking east, one west; one face seen by those entering the doorway of the temple, one seen by those leaving.

Saturday afternoon, May 15, 2010, was a time for looking backward and forward at the Beach Institute African American Culture Center.
> Click here to read more.

> UCC Churches Respond to Nashville Floods

The recent flooding in Nashville, while it has not had a direct impact on any of our four churches in the city, has caused significant damage to the homes of members of our churches and communities surrounding them. Holy Trinity Community UCC has responded by organizing relief efforts, clean-up crews, and fund-raisers. They are beginning to collect clothes and furniture for those whose homes have been damaged or lost. Howard Congregational UCC is concerned about reaching out to its neighborhood, the underserved north end of Nashville. The Southeast Conference Disaster Assistance Relief Team is beginning to coordinate a response, providing clean up kits and emergency assistance. At this time, collections are being taken and, in consultation with the national disaster relief offices of the UCC, we are beginning to respond more fully.

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>> Click Here to read more.

>> Click Here to make a donation. When making an online donation please put **Holy Trinity Nashville Flood** in the "Other" field.

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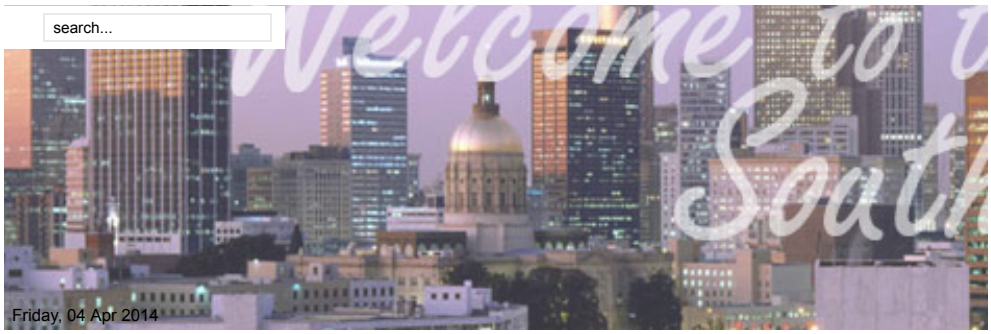

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Lifting Up... June

Hank Tuttle Passes Away Following a Long Illness

We received notice that Hank Tuttle, a long time UCC minister retired in the Huntsville, AL area, died in May. Hank had an extended and courageous struggle with Parkinson's disease. He had retired from ministry at Grace Reformed UCC, Washington, DC. In this conference, Hank had served Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham, and United Church UCC, Huntsville. He is survived by his wife Jean, his children and grandchildren.

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Holy Trinity & Flood

The UCC has been wonderfully responsive to the flooding in Nashville and surrounding areas. Connie & Bob Waidmann, Florence Coppola, the Ala-Tn Association, and the SEC have all been extremely supportive, helpful, and comforting during this time of need.

>> Click here to read latest update from Jennifer Austin and Holy Trinity UCC.

The four UCC churches in Nashville continue to assess needs within their congregations and communities, and will meet together with the National UCC Disaster group **June 16-18** to begin long-term recovery ministries. **We look forward to working with our UCC family from across the SEC** and the nation as we continue recovery efforts. Nashville is a vibrant and loving community with a bright and hopeful future. ***God is still speaking ya'll!***

If your church plans to offer help would you please let the **SEC Disaster Assistance & Relief Team** so we can keep of list of the congregations who are able to help. Contact via email Connie Waidmann or 931-200-5556

Make a Donation to SECUCC and continue to help those in need in Nashville.

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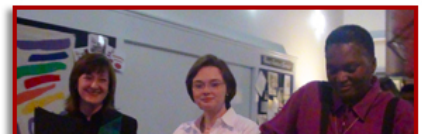
Feature Focus - June

Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, June 10-12, Celebrates Transitions, Changes and Invites Us to be a People of Vision!

As one of our pastors drove up the driveway to Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville, for the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference, she saw the food tent set out on the lawn and exclaimed, "Oh boy, a family picnic!" From Thursday, June 10th through Saturday the 12th, the Southeast Conference gathered from across our five and a half state region to eat, share warm fellowship, welcome new friends, worship, and reflect on our future in this time of dramatic change.

The kickoff of the event was the TAP Commencement Thursday evening, where 65 people gathered for a banquet, worship and a celebration of the graduation of Gwen Thomas from the TAP program. Preaching for the commencement worship service was Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Associate Professor of Homiletics at Lancaster Theological Seminary, and perhaps more importantly, the sister of Gwen Thomas.

At the opening of the TAP Convocation on Friday morning, Dr. Bridgeman invited us to reflect on what it means to be a resurrection people within our communities. She suggested to us that we are at our best children of the Still Speaking God, and called us into conversations across generations where we can say to one another, "I'll teach you new technologies if you teach me old philosophy." She called on us to reflect at all times on the question, "What does the church do about the brokenhearted?" The convocation continued that afternoon with a presentation by Dr. Jo Hudson, Senior Pastor of the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, Texas, the third largest church in the United Church of Christ. She spoke of churches as too often entering change the way cats respond to being lowered into water: we do not welcome it and we do not seek it. However, she continued, change is inevitable, and we are called to reflect on just where God is in the changes around us. She noted that strangers bring gifts into our congregation as well as change, and we are a people whose faith calls us to welcome the stranger and the changes they bring with therm.



The Annual Meeting itself

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opened with the traditional worship service on Friday evening that was distinguished by liturgy written by the recent UCC History and Polity class, a dynamic sermon by Dr. Jo Hudson, and music provided by the choir and soloists from Church of the Savior. Organized around the theme; "Behold! I do a new thing!," we celebrated through the liturgy our dynamic new church starts, the growing numbers of churches that are seeking affiliation with us across the South, and the prophetic work of women of the Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville to oppose mountain top removal.

Saturday morning we began with our traditional memorial service where representatives of all of our churches are invited forward to read names of members who have died over the course of the year. Often called one of the most moving parts of our gathering, the service acknowledges that the ministries in which we are engaged are ministries that have been bequeathed to us by our forbearers.

During our business meeting, several themes were lifted up. We recognized our Covenant Keepers, those churches that gave 10% or more of their operating budget to OCWM (our Church's Wider Mission) Basic Support. Of the nine Covenant Keeper churches, seven are new church starts or newly affiliated churches. Treasurer Paul Hiltman noted that we are closing the deficit gradually year by year, and in 2009, it was the smallest it has been in several years. We took time during the meeting to recognize the extraordinary work that Cameron Trimble has accomplished during her five years on the staff as Associate Conference Minister for Church Development. Tim Downs noted that Cameron is a minister of prodigious gifts, and that she has effectively developed a new model of new church development for the entire denomination. We are proud to be a key part of generating the Center for Progressive Renewal, of which she is the Executive Director, and which will be a new partner in our own ministries.

Ginny Nixon of Pleasant Hill Community UCC, TN, was elected Moderator, and Jim Crabb of Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta as Vice Moderator. Newly elected to the Board are: Gwen Thomas of Victory UCC, Stone Mountain; Glen Jared of Holy Trinity Community UCC, Nashville:, Blair Bonds of Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta; and Susan Dunn of Circular Congregational UCC, Charleston, SC. Elected as new General Synod delegates are Suzanne Washburn of Sandy Creek UCC, Lafayette, AL; Jennifer Spears of Garden of Grace UCC, Columbia SC; and Christophe Ringer of Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville. For further information about the Annual Meeting, you can see the Annual Report on the website. There will soon be video highlights of our time together posted on the web site.

2010 TAP Graduate is in a 'Class of Her Own'

It was somewhat unusual this year, but we had only one individual who graduated from the Theology Among the People (TAP) Program at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting in Knoxville, TN. Gwen Thomas, who started with the TAP group at Victory UCC in Stone Mountain, GA six years ago, completed TAP via distance learning, following a hiatus from the program due to work and other obligations. Gwen, however, demonstrates how TAP remains a way in which we equip the saints for the work of ministry in the Southeast Conference, and both discover and nurture leadership in local, conference, and national settings of the United Church of Christ.

>> **Click Here** to **Read About Our Most Recent Graduate**

Delayed but Not Denied
>> **Read More** from **Gwen Thomas in Her Own Words**

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Delayed but Not Denied

by Gwen Thomas – TAP Graduate 2010

Slow and steady wins the race—and leads to completion of the TAP program! I have a new understanding of one of my favorite scriptures, Isaiah 40: 29- 31. "...God energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts .For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, they run and don't get tired, and they walk and don't lag behind.' (The Message)

After starting the TAP program 6 years ago, I was blessed to graduate by the grace of God, technology and Rev, Kathy Clark. Thanks to an online History and Polity class, I was able to complete the program in spite of life challenges and a heavy work travel schedule. And honestly, I think my graduation was maybe even more special to me than it might have been three years ago. First, I got to be "in a class all by myself". And even more delightful, I got to share it with my sister, Rev. Dr, Valerie Bridgeman, who preached for the graduation service.

Valerie challenged us to "Whistle While You Work!" And she reminded me that the ultimate pay for the work that Jesus did is symbolized by the cross. She urged me take up my cross with care and consciousness.

I believe that what seemed like a stall or missed opportunity to graduate with my former classmates was really all in Divine Order.

Thanks be to God!

Conference News - June

Conference Continues New Church Development and Inviting Affiliations

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Conference interviewed three new church start pastors at its meeting on June 11th. They were Ellen Sims of Open Table Community of Faith, Mobile, AL; Chris Lyman Waldron, of Praxis UCC, Atlanta; and Candace Chellew of Jubilee Circle UCC, in Columbia, SC. Open Table and Praxis were recognized as new church starts of the Southeast Conference and Jubilee Circle will be recognized once they have completed their final interview with the New Church Development Advisory Committee. Safe Harbor Family Church of Jackson, MS has entered the process of exploring covenant with the UCC. A church which has a worshipping congregation of about 100, it is currently non-denominational, and was founded thirteen years ago. Currently the Conference staff is leading the process of study and discernment with them. We are also in a time of discernment with Covenant Community Church in Birmingham, AL.

Circle Your Calendars, Capital Campaign Workshops Coming to the SE Conference in The Fall

As an ongoing part of developing the Transforming Church, Transforming Lives Campaign of the Southeast Conference, we are encouraging churches to conduct combined campaigns to address their own needs while seeking to participate in the conference campaign. To equip churches to do this, we are making a range of resources available to them. The first training will take place at the Alabama-Tennessee Association Fall Meeting, to be held at Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham, in November 6th. Steve Havey, who has directed the conference campaign, will be available to walk churches through the process of doing their own campaign. On November 13th, he will do the same for the churches of the Georgia-South Carolina Association, at First Congregational UCC, Atlanta. There will also be online resources made available. If churches wish to have individual consultation, those can be arranged as well. Steve Havey will offer his services to churches of the Southeast Conference at discounted rates if they wish to have him direct their campaigns.

Thailand Trip Alumni Retreat 5/28-29/2010

In January 2008, seventeen clergy and lay people of the SECUCC participated in the TAP GTE immersion trip to Thailand. On May 28 – 29, 2010, eight of us reunited for the alumni retreat at the Simpsonwood Lodges. Although many of the participants were not able to attend the retreat, those who came were able to rekindle the spirit of enthusiasm and appreciation for the kind of global theological education we all experienced in Thailand.

The overnight retreat entailed sharing one another's journey following the Thailand experience, and exploring the ways in which we could continue to improve the global theological education program with particular focus on the upcoming trip to Thailand in January, 2011. The alumni's reflections and advices for the next group of GTE participants were recorded for viewing at the pre-trip orientation retreat in September, 2010.

One of the highlights of the retreat was celebrating the wedding announcement of John

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THE CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE RENEWAL

Gill and Deborah Cliburn, which reminded me that life is indeed like a box of chocolate—you never know what you're gonna get! The couple had not only caught the travel bug, but also a love bug following the trip, and they will be happily married on July 3rd. Congratulations to our first TAP GTE couple!

Even after two and a half years, the trip participants shared vivid reflections of their experience in Thailand. Inasmuch as the experience broadened the horizon of our perspective on the world, the experience deepened our understanding of ourselves. Through an open discussion, we agreed that true learning takes place when we open ourselves up to new experiences, and engage in serendipitous self-discovery. Through a newly gained self-awareness on how we see, smell, hear, taste, feel, and think of the world so unfamiliar to us, we are able to rise to another level of consciousness and grow in wisdom.

It seems that truly good experience boils down to the people, and the interpersonal relationship we cultivate in all things we do, wherever we are. The alumni expressed their admiration for the hard working people we had met in Thailand who persevered in their work despite the daily challenges they face, such as economic injustice and poverty, diseases, racism, sexism, religious oppression, and regional violence. Their stories awakened us from our own complacency stemming from our relatively comfortable world, with an understanding that God and God's people have more work to do in the world to make it a healthier place.

For the most part, the participants of the first trip to Thailand have been a wonderful group to be with. I would say that we already came into the experience with much openness, maturity, flexibility, and willingness to learn and absorb that allowed for a successful mutual learning experience. This has been a wonderful opportunity to reunite once again to reflect on our unique collective venture. We hope to see each other again on our next alumni retreat! For additional information contact Rev. Sarah Kim , GTE Thailand Trip Coordinator

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Celebrations - June

Sharron Eckert Recognized by State of Tennessee

Sharron Eckert, a member of Pleasant Hill Community UCC, TN, was recognized for a lifetime of service and leadership by the House of Representatives of the State of Tennessee in House Joint Resolution # 932. Of particular note in the resolution was her work in establishing the Cumberland Artisan for Creative Expression, her advocacy for the arts by serving on the Boards of the Cumberland County Playhouse, the Upper Cumberland Arts Alliance, and involvement in the Fairfield Glade Art Guild. The resolution ends with the words, "we hereby commend Sharron L. Eckert for her honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction."

Janet Weidler Called to Serve as Pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham

Janet Weidler of Hendersonville, NC, was called on June 13th to serve as the pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC. The church, which is in the process of moving to a new location in downtown Birmingham, conducted an extended national search for a leader to guide them into the 21st century. Janet has previously served a succession of interim ministries in Maine and, before that, in Penn Northeast Conference. She is married to Richard Weidler and they are the parents of two children. Janet will succeed Bud Precise who will be retiring.

Michael Garrett Married in June

We are pleased to announce the marriage of Michael Garrett, long time pastor of First Congregational UCC, Montgomery, this month. Further details to come!

Bill Bateman Married May 16th

Bill Bateman, UCC minister, member of Pleasant Hill Community UCC, and pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Fairfield Glade, TN, was married on May 16th to Shirley Hudson.

Ordination of Lillian H. Strahine Scheduled for July 25th

Lillian Strahine, approved for ordination by the Alabama-Tennessee Association in April, will be ordained in a service at 2:00PM Sunday, July 25th, at the Benton Chapel, Vanderbilt University. All clergy of the Alabama-Tennessee Association are encouraged to be present, and all members of all the churches of the association are cordially invited. Lillian will be installed in a four-way covenant, which will include representatives of the ministry to which she is being ordained, a chaplaincy at Vanderbilt Hospital, and her home church, Brookmeade Congregational UCC. Representing the Association will be Barbara Everett, chair of the Church and Ministry Committee, and Ginny Nixon, the moderator of the Southeast Conference.

Southeast Conference DART Volunteers Serve in American Samoa

Members of the Southeast Conference Disaster Assistance Relief Team are serving in relief work in American Samoa. In June, Missy Johns, a member of Holy Trinity

Community UCC, Nashville, will be in American Samoa, and in July, Kevin Collins of Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville, will follow her.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

« < April 2014 > »

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Steps to Planting a New Church News Contact Us Donate

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Looking Backward and Forward - *by Louise Lautier Owens*

Both history and future are rich in Savannah, GA, where the American Missionary Association unites education, church, and African American culture. Two faces characterize Janus, the Roman god: one face looking east, one west. One face is seen by those entering the doorway of the temple and one is seen by those leaving.

Saturday afternoon, May 15, 2010, was a time for looking backward and forward at the Beach Institute African American Culture Center. At an open house marking resumption of regular programming after nearly two years of offerings limited by construction, the audience was led to look backward to the formative years of the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation, which operates Beach Institute. Dr. Annette K. Brock, chairwoman of the Board of Directors, paid tribute to the many persons who made significant contributions of time, talent and treasure to its development.

The audience was led further backward to 1867 when teachers from the American Missionary Association (AMA) came to Savannah and established the school for newly freed slaves. Two years later, in 1869, citizens of color in Savannah, along with members of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Charleston, SC and teachers of the Beach Institute, founded the "First Church" in Savannah. For two years, the church met in the basement of the school. Thus began their almost symbiotic relationship.

Today, 141 years later, a 4-foot by 6-foot panorama installed inside the main entrance to the garden floor of Beach Institute depicts the connection between the school and First Congregational Church. This panorama was created for the May 2010 re-opening. It presents a timeline with narrative and pictures of milestones and personalities in the Church's history from 1869 – 1919. (In the latter year, the school became part of the Chatham County educational system.)

Church members Dorothy DeVillars, Helen Washington and Dr. Clyde Hall, chairperson, brought the timeline to completion especially for the re-opening. A copy of the panorama also greets visitors to the Madeline V. Hannar Fellowship hall at First Church. With both Beach Institute and First Congregational Church showcasing the same display, their institutional lives continue to be intertwined.

Additionally, the "AMA Board Room," also on the garden floor, is a tribute to the early teachers at Beach. Louise Lautier Owens, member of First Church and former Beach Institute board member, named the room. She chose to honor the American Missionary Association for its place in Beach Institute history. In the AMA Board Room, a picture of Joseph Cinque, leader of fifty-five mutineers on the schooner LaAmistad, takes visitors back to the seminal event underlying the formation of the American Missionary Association itself.

Looking either backward or forward, from the founding of Beach Institute and First Congregational Church, there are myriad incidents and situations worthy of review and remembrance. The panorama and the AMA Board Room represent only two backward/forward views of UCC history in Savannah, Georgia.

Louise Lautier Owens is a member of the First Congregational UCC, Savannah, GA and a member of the Savannah TAP Group

Visit the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation website for further information: http://www.kingtisdell.org/beachinst.html.